
Readers interested specifically in classical archaeology will probably find little of interest in this book, of which only 30 pages are devoted to a short case study of burial locations in relation to two classical towns, Asea and Tegea within Arcadia in the Greek Peloponnese. This is one of two case studies, the other being of the Late Neolithic cemetery of Ajvide on the Baltic island of Gotland, which Fahlander uses to exemplify his particular brand of postmodern archaeological theory, “microarchaeology.”

This book is largely an exploration of social theory. After a short introduction, the second chapter—the longest in the book—develops an elaborate theorization of social practice, which builds on Tony Giddens’ theory of structuration using Lacan’s psychoanalytic triad of the “imagined,” the “symbolic,” and the “Real,” Slavoj Zizek’s formulation of ideology, Gayatri Spivak’s postcolonialist exploration of the subaltern, and Satre’s concept of series. It also pays homage to Wittgenstein, Foucault, Garfinkel, and Goffmann. Rejecting the grand narratives of conventional archaeology, this approach attempts to focus on the ordinary, the particular, and the heterogeneous at the local level, eschewing regional and wider cultural traditions as imposed archaeological fictions. At the core of Fahlander’s model is the relationship between “structurating practices,” which form clusters over space and time as “structurating positivities” or “nodes” that can be metaphorically compared with a multiplicity of threads coming together as a rope made up of myriad threads, joining and parting along its length.

Satre’s concept of series is employed as a means of identifying groups within the inhumation cemetery of Ajvide that are not otherwise apparent in terms of age, sex, or grave goods. Satre’s metaphor for a series is a bus queue—people who just happen to be a group for a fleeting moment only—and Fahlander suggests that groups of graves at Ajvide (distinguished by orientation, spatial proximity, or grave shape) could form such series; perhaps these individuals were buried around the same time, their only shared commonality being the timing of their deaths (though how we might establish the reality of these groups beyond the pictorial examples—that are employed to persuade us of the usefulness of his theoretical approach. His rejection of analogies from small-scale traditional societies is seemingly based on the specious notion that these prop up unacceptable, grand narratives of social evolution; to then suggest that much better analogies for the ancient past may be drawn from science fiction is just plain daft. Every Ph.D. student has to proclaim the death of the old through the innovations of their own work, but to say that there have been no advances in theory and method in funerary archaeology since the early 1980s is dishonest—phenomenology, isotopic and DNA analysis, and more sophisticated inquiries into ideology and emotion are just some of the many new directions in this field. His accusation that Giddens’ theory of structuration is inadequate for ancient societies is correct, but evidently he is not aware that Giddens only considered it valid for modern societies after their social rupture from their pre-industrial pasts.

Structuration theory and its spawn of agency theorizations in archaeology have been immensely attractive to archaeologists over the last 25 years, but they are notoriously difficult to apply in practice, both in archaeology and in the other social sciences. This book is no exception, a fact recognized by the author who admits that his case studies do not prove the theory. Sadly, they do not take us to a new level of understanding of the archaeology either. Regardless of whether one is tired of postmodern loopiness or frustrated by certain archaeological theoreticians’ inabilitys in applying theory to practice, young scholars have to develop new perspectives as part of the structuration of Western archaeological practice, and they may be excused their unshakable

The emergence, and re-emergence, of infectious disease confronts humans in both developing and developed countries today with factors such as poverty, lack of health-care facilities, drug resistance, and movement of people looking for better lives featuring highly in the increases in infectious disease. These facts are all problems that still face aDNA analysis. Furthermore, readers of this type of research should, therefore, be cautious in accepting all published results. As part of a recent doctoral thesis (Chilvers, "Ancient DNA and Palaeopathology: Malaria in Ancient Greece" [Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester, 2004]), a survey of the potential authenticity of published pathogenic DNA papers found that in 39 papers published on DNA and disease diagnosis between 1994 and 2003, 32 did not discuss whether results had been independently replicated, 2 said they had not, and the remaining 5 said that they had been replicated. This aside, this book makes for interesting reading.

The book is divided into three parts (evolution and ecology, different aspects of human disease, and the state of the art). Greenblatt provides an overview of how infection originated and evolved into a disease, emphasizing quite rightly that the "context of disease . . . can hardly be ignored." Martin considers the earth's history, disease, and primate evolution. While this overview chapter is useful, one could challenge the acceptance of "syphilis in a Pleistocene bear" and the statement that there is little evidence of pre-Columbian syphilis outside of the New World. A conference in France (Dutour et al., The Origin of Syphilis in Europe. Before or after 1493? [Toulon 1993]) proved there was much more evidence for pre-Columbian syphilis in Europe than has been believed, and additional evidence has more recently emerged (e.g., Mitchell, "Pre-Columbian Treponemal Disease from 14th Century AD Safed, Israel," American Journal of Physical Anthropology 121 [2003] 117–24). The discussions on the evolution of tuberculosis would also have benefited from a consideration of the work by Brosch et al. ("A New Evolutionary Scenario for the Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Complex," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA 99 [2002] 3684–9) concerning the lack of evidence for Mycobacterium tuberculosis evolving from M. bovis. Gortz and Michel look at the potential for new pathogens occurring in protozoa. Protozoa are hosts and/or vectors and they feed on microorganisms, especially bacteria, a good example being Legionnaires' disease. Cano considers the potential of using fossilized evidence from amber as an indicator of evolutionary change in species, and Black charts the evolution of arthropod disease vectors (e.g., in the case of malaria, where the mosquito carries the parasite to infect human populations).

Part 2 starts with a chapter by Baum and Bar-Gal on the diversity of human pathogens and coevolution of humans with their pathogens. This chapter is fascinating, particularly for its discussion of the human HIV1 and HIV2 infections and their close relationship to simian immunodeficiency viruses in chimpanzees and the sooty mangabey monkey, respectively. Unfortunately, DNA analysis is often presented as the answer to all our questions about infections. I would also argue that the introduction of large-scale medical treatments is probably not the most significant factor affecting the development of human disease. It may be one of the factors, but poverty is very much involved with the occurrence of disease. However, I would agree that understanding the evolution of pathogens is key to dealing with the future, and DNA analysis could help trace the evolution of organisms, as has already been done by Zink et al. ("Molecular Characterisation of Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Complex in Ancient Egyptian Mummies," International Journal of Osteoarchaeology 14 [2004] 404–13).

Cohen and Crane-Kramer discuss the subject of palaeoepidemiology. This is a very useful review of the